



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/664,351	09/16/2003	David S. Zuck	QC-001-1C	4141
27946	7590	06/10/2004	EXAMINER	
ARTHUR J. BEHIEL 6601 KOLL CENTER PARKWAY SUITE 245 PLEASANTON, CA 94566			CARRILLO, BIBI SHARIDAN	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			1746	
DATE MAILED: 06/10/2004				

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/664,351	ZUCK ET AL.
	Examiner Sharidan Carrillo	Art Unit 1746

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 16 September 2003.

2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-33 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) 1-18 and 30-33 is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 19-29 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) 1-33 are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on 16 September 2003 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) All b) Some * c) None of:
1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 09162003.

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6) Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

1. Restriction to one of the following inventions is required under 35 U.S.C. 121:
 - I. Claims 1-18, 30-33, drawn to the apparatus, classified in class 134, subclass 102.1.
 - II. Claims 19-29, drawn to a method of forcing steam in semiconductor equipment, classified in class 134, subclass 22.1.
2. The inventions are distinct, each from the other because of the following reasons:

Inventions I and II are related as process and apparatus for its practice. The inventions are distinct if it can be shown that either: (1) the process as claimed can be practiced by another materially different apparatus or by hand, or (2) the apparatus as claimed can be used to practice another and materially different process. (MPEP § 806.05(e)). In this case, the method can be performed with a different apparatus which does not include a cleaning fixture connected to the steam source and adapted to interface with the component channel. For example, the method can be performed by passing steam to a semiconductor equipment directly via a conduit means.

Because these inventions are distinct for the reasons given above and have acquired a separate status in the art as shown by their different classification, restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper.

3. During a telephone conversation with Mr. Arthur Behiel 6/1/2004 a provisional election was made without traverse to prosecute the invention of Group II, claims 19-29. Affirmation of this election must be made by applicant in replying to this Office action. Claims 1-18 and 30-33

are withdrawn from further consideration by the examiner, 37 CFR 1.142(b), as being drawn to a non-elected invention.

Applicant is reminded that upon the cancellation of claims to a non-elected invention, the inventorship must be amended in compliance with 37 CFR 1.48(b) if one or more of the currently named inventors is no longer an inventor of at least one claim remaining in the application. Any amendment of inventorship must be accompanied by a request under 37 CFR 1.48(b) and by the fee required under 37 CFR 1.17(i).

Specification

4. The use of the trademark VESPEL has been noted in this application on page 2, for example. It should be capitalized wherever it appears and be accompanied by the generic terminology.

Although the use of trademarks is permissible in patent applications, the proprietary nature of the marks should be respected and every effort made to prevent their use in any manner which might adversely affect their validity as trademarks.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

5. The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

6. Claims 19-29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, because the specification, while being enabling for the cleaning of the showerhead, does not reasonably provide enablement for cleaning of any semiconductor process equipment. The specification does not

enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and/or use the invention commensurate in scope with these claims..

The claims embrace an invention which contains any known semiconductor process equipment (i.e. chuck, piping, wafer, spray nozzle), which could/ can be selected from literally thousands. It does not appear to be feasible that any semiconductor process equipment would function in the present invention. Further, for one skilled in the art to reproduce the present invention (which must be possible, if the specification is adequate), there would clearly be undue experimentation to do so in an attempt to figure out which component channels work and which ones do not.

7. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

8. Claims 19-29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 19 is indefinite because it is unclear what one of ordinary skill in the art would consider as “reaction products”. The claim is further indefinite because it is unclear whether the interior or exterior surface of the equipment is cleaned. It is also unclear what one of ordinary skill in the art would consider as “semiconductor process equipment”. Claim 34 fails to positively recite a step of removing reaction products from the equipment and it is also unclear what products are being removed from the equipment since “reaction products” are undefined.

Claims 22 and 23 are indefinite because “the steam pressure” and “the steam temperature” lack positive antecedent basis. Claim 28 is indefinite because “the water

“equipment” lacks positive antecedent basis. Claim 29 is indefinite because the apparatus claim is dependent upon the method claim. Further claim 29 is indefinite because it is not further limiting. Claim 29 does not further define an apparatus, but only includes method limitations.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

9. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

10. Claims 19-21, 23-27 and 29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Chen et al. (5545289).

Chen et al. teach a method of stripping halogen etchant byproducts from a semiconductor substrate using water vapor, oxygen and nitrogen (col. 1, lines 35-55, col. 2, lines 5-10, col. 3, lines 60-65, col. 7, lines 5-25, col. 7, lines 55-65). In reference to claims 19 and 29, refer to Fig. 2, col. 5, lines 50-55 and col. 7, lines 8-22. In reference to claim 20, refer to col. 2, lines 5-10. In reference to claim 21, refer to col. 1, lines 35-40. In reference to claim 23, refer to col. 7, lines 15-17. In reference to claim 24, refer to Fig. 1, element 62. In reference to claims 25 and 26, Chen et al. teach a multicycle process. In reference to claim 27, refer to col. 7, lines 15-17 which teaches boiling water to form steam.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

11. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person

having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

12. The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

13. Claims 22 and 28 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chen et al. (5545289) in view of Mehta et al. (5356482).

Chen et al. fail to teach the limitations of claims 22 and 28. Chen et al. do teach that the pressure in the chamber can be varied. Mehta et al. teach cleaning of process vessels to remove decontaminants by treating with steam formed at a temperature of 210°F and at a pressure greater than 1 atmosphere (20-60psig). The parameters are followed in order for condensation of the steam vapor to occur such that the condensed liquid and contaminants can be easily removed from the process vessel.

It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to have modified the method of Chen et al. to include a pressure of greater than 1 atmosphere, as taught by Mehta et al., for purposes of condensing the steam vapor such that contaminants can be easily removed from the process vessel.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Sharidan Carrillo whose telephone number is 571-272-1297. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday, 6:00a.m-2:30pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Randy P. Gulakowski can be reached on 571-272-1302. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Sharidan Carrillo
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1746

bsc



SHARIDAN CARRILLO
PRIMARY EXAMINER